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II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

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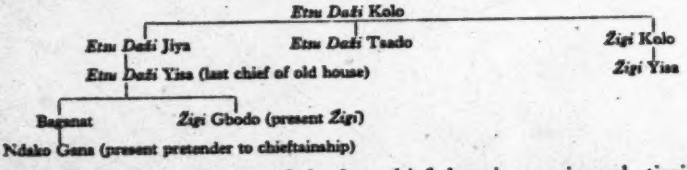
Rank order	*Title*	*Office*	*Locality ('efu')*	*Succession*	*Insigma, magic, &c.*	*Remarks*
1	*Etsu Dañi*	Chief	Dañi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Žigi* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shaba*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shaba*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dañi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotū*	..	„	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Makū*	..	„	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndefie*	..	Edokó	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Dzoko*	..	Takogi	„	..	..
8	*Boba*	..	Kpacinefu	„	..	..
9	*Shabazhi*	..	Ndadofu	„	..	..
10	*Bedo*	..	Dañi	„	..	..
11	*Žitsu Bebi*	..	Edokó	„	..	..
12	*Maji*	..	„	„	..	..
13	*Maji Egbe* (or *Ndace*)	Head of Hunters	„	„	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences.

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It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Žitsu* and *Žigi*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual power vested in his house as a weapon

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622 793 578 against the ruling chief whom he regarded as an usurper. He refused the chief the use of the sacred insignia—the bangles of Tsoede—without which the annual chief's ritual cannot be performed. Finally, in 1934, he asked me to intervene for him so that he should be given official authority to keep in his possession the invaluable insignia, which the chief was demanding back not so much for religious reasons (for some of his brothers and sons were already posing as Mohammedans), as in order to deprive the rival family of this convincing evidence of their claim to the rule of Doko. The case remained undecided, and the rivalry between the two men unrelieved, till in 1936 the chief offered the 'pretender' official recognition of a sort, namely, the title *Makū*. The highest rank next to the chief's, *Shaba*, had just fallen vacant, and a reshuffle of titles had taken place. Ndakó Gana, however, rejected the title *Makū*—a new title, introduced *ad hoc* (copied from the dynastic ranks in Bida)—as a meaningless, makeshift sort of rank and demanded instead the rank of *Shaba* itself. The deadlock was finally overcome by an appeal of both parties to the *Etsu*; he managed to persuade the young man to accept the offered rank, at least as an earnest, and as more fitting to his age.

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

622 The tasks of government which fall to the village chief are these:

1. He appoints the village elders from the ranks of the family heads and is thus bound, as by a constitution in the modern sense, to accept their co-operation and advice in all matters of village government.
2. He controls the land resources of the community and in this capacity apportions farm-land, trees, fishing rights, and levies certain tributes and land dues from the families holding village land. With this aspect of village government we shall deal later on in detail, in the chapter on land-tenure.
3. He is not, as we have seen, the religious head of the community. But he organizes, directly or indirectly, and partly finances, certain religious rites linked with chieftainship.
4. He arbitrates in litigation and wields (though now only on a limited scale) a certain informal judicial power.
5. He organizes all large-scale co-operation and concerted action of the village community.

We have already spoken of the composition of the village council and the co-operation between chief and elders. Let me add some concrete data to illustrate the working of the village 'constitution'.

627 A Doko farmer had quarrelled with a neighbour over some trees; people from a village near Mokwa came into Mokwa to borrow masks for the *elo* ritual which they were going to perform, having lost their own masks; a family head in Sakpe accused his sister's son who lived in his house of having stolen rice from his farm; a girl in Laboži denounced two strangers who had been given hospitality by a neighbour and whom she saw stealing their host's clothes; a young man in Jebba accused his wife of adultery; another man in Jebba complained that a certain hunter

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abandoned excitement of one or the other of the three ceremonials *gunnu*, *gani* and *navũ*. This break in the 'ethos' of Nupe religion carries its own explanation; for it is understood as a licence, setting aside normally valid and precisely named controls—of sex and of physical violence against political opponents. Here, then, impulses repressed in secular life are compensated, and tensions generated through the repression, offered explosive, or 'cathartic', release. Religion, in providing these outlets (on circumscribed occasions), anticipates as well as canalizes the working of psychological mechanisms, which might otherwise operate in random fashion or beyond the control of the society, in the 'private worlds' of neuroses and psychopathic fantasies.[1]

Probably no society is free from some such repressions. In Nupe, they are clearly traceable. The 'ethos' of Nupe life is again generally calm and restrained; but in some measure it is only meant to appear so. That it also conceals deep anxieties and tensions is shown by the witchcraft fantasies, which belie the acquiescence so often typical of the overt relationship between the sexes. And in one sphere of social life, in political ambition, passions and anxieties come to the surface. Consider, however, that this intense political rivalry is itself an instance of 'constraint', imposed as it is by the rigid class society. Indeed, it is doubly 'constrained'; for the passions here aroused are not permitted free play, as they might in some kind of jungle ethics, but are hemmed in by an intricate code of etiquette imposing semblance of gentility and acquiescence. We must conclude, then, that the uneven mood of Nupe religion indicates an 'ethos' kept calm and unexcited through those circumscribed chances of unrestraint. In other words, while certain facts of worship express the calmness meant to govern mundane life, others make it possible, through absorbing its disturbances into their own explosive mood. As we know, the balance is imperfect; there are the sudden outbursts of political passion when pent-up tensions find 'random' relief, as well as escapes into neurosis. Let us note a further point. One familiar 'compensation', in the form of fantasies about a golden age or a promised millennium, is entirely absent in Nupe religion. The Nupe attempt to resolve the 'uneasiness' of reality not in ideological fashion but, as I put it before, by the 'sheer dynamics' of repressions lifted and emotional tensions relieved.

Here we are already touching upon the fusion of 'assurance' and 'stimulation'. It occurs, briefly, when 'living through' the acts of worship leaves some lasting effect upon the individual's attitude towards the world around him: the cathartic relief of the few hectic rituals implies precisely this. Yet the effect is diffuse and in

[1] See my *Foundations*, p. 356.

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Succession to Chieftainship. Here we must turn back to the position of the Kede chief and the question of succession to Kede chieftainship. For the highest in the series of promotion which we have just been discussing, the ultimate promotion open to members of the chief's family, is promotion to chieftainship. The rank next to the chief's, *Egba* (here meaning 'deputy'), is in fact regarded as the rank of an 'heir apparent', and is as a rule held by the most senior among the titled relatives of the chief, his younger brother, or elder brother's son. Succession to chieftainship, more rigid than succession to the other political offices, thus allows the chief-to-be to consolidate his position in advance of his actual appointment. The tribal notables exercise a certain indirect influence: for in every one of the repeated routine decisions on the promotion of a 'delegate' they already decide to some degree his future chances as a candidate for chieftainship. But then, the ruling chief is himself one of the 'electors' and can easily turn the decision in favour of the candidate whom he supports.[1] Here becomes clear what I have said above about the kinship relation between the Kede chief and his 'delegates' tending to strengthen the position of the chief. The mere tie of kinship between them may conceivably prove a weak and unreliable support of his authority; but the fact that the delegates remain dependent on the favour of the chief for their promotion and political career in general turns it into a bulwark of chiefly power.

With 'councillors' and 'delegates' both dependent upon his goodwill, the Kede chief exercised an almost absolute authority—more absolute, I may add, than any other chief of Nupe. Repeated promotion and transfer, all decided in the capital, tied the delegates closely to Muregi and prevented them from making for themselves too independent a position in their temporary dominions. The 'absolute' power of the Kede chief thus appears as a necessary element in the control of this mobile political system which, with its scattered outposts and colonies, yet depended so much on smooth co-operation and concerted action. The weakness of the system lay in the fact that it allowed no legitimate check on the power of the chief. A more equitable balance of power could only be achieved by illegitimate means—that is, by feuds and

[1] It is significant, in this connexion, that the present *Kuta* introduced a new rank for his son when the list of traditional ranks was exhausted (see the chart of Kede ranks).

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factional splits within the hereditary ruling class. The recent history of the Kede contains indeed evidence of such rivalry between the Kede chief and his officers of State, or between different claimants to Kede rulership, and the ensuing division of the country into rival factions.[1] Attachment to one of the rival factions is also the only means by which the subject classes, the commoners with no rank and office, could exercise an indirect influence upon the political management of their country.

Administration of the 'Colonies'. The following chart illustrates the different grades in the rank list of Kede delegates. The ranks are given in order of precedence, each rank together with the district to which its holder is posted. The last five ranks on the list do not belong to members of the chief's family, but to that group of 'household' ranks which are also occasionally vested with emissaryships.

Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly*
Egba	Elder brother's son (classific.)	Gbara	Kpatagban (right bank)
Sonfara	Son	Lives in Muregi, no emissaryship	(A newly introduced rank)
Kofiẽ	Younger brother (classific.)	Raba	Raba
Ekpā	Younger brother (classific.)	Kpacefu	—
Tswadiya	Younger brother	Ketsogi	Ketsogi
Lefiti	Younger brother of *Egba*	Muregi, no emissaryship	Kpacefu
Liman Gyedwa	Distant relation	,,	Kpasha (right bank)
Tswadyagi	,,	,,	Kpasha

[1] Factional splits of this kind were occasionally utilized and fostered by outside Powers. Thus the Royal Niger Company supported an *Egba* in whom they found a valuable ally against the ruling *Kuta*, promising the former the chieftainship in return for the support of his faction. And once or twice the Emirs of Nupe backed the rival claimant of Kede chieftainship against the 'official' candidate.

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634 highways of the country), homicide, seduction, and the crime *lèse*
674 *majesté* ('abuse of the king', in Nupe phraseology). In securing
698 a criminal, the *Kuta's* own men would act as a police force; if the crime came under the heading of a 'king's crime' the same police force would take the prisoner to the capital, where judgement would then be passed upon him by the king and his councillors.

634 We can say that with the exception of offences against kinship
693 rules (e.g. the incest taboo) and offences against religious rules—the various religious rules of the *kintsoʒi* which were of no concern to the Kede rulers—no serious breach of established rules of conduct was left to private settlement or to the informal sanctions of 'public opinion'. The comprehensiveness of the claims of the Kede State to enforce conduct within its boundaries must yet admit of one significant limitation: the Kede must surrender jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed in their territory to their overlords; they must, in other words, agree to a limitation of their autonomy in the interest of the Emirate at large. We shall presently encounter another aspect of the maintenance of 'law and order' in which the prerogative of the Kede chief must give way to that of the central government of the country, yet in which the relation between the two is, in the very nature of things, much less clearly defined: the territorial rights of the various subject groups which are united under Nupe rule.

634 *Territorial Rights.* The Kede, as the overlords of the *kintsoʒi*,
423 guarantee to their own subject groups certain corporate territorial rights. The semi-riverain *kintsoʒi*, as we have seen, derive their livelihood to a large extent from fishing in the backwaters and creeks of the River Niger. The fishing rights of the different *kintsoʒi* villages were upheld by the Kede rulers and enforced if need arose by the full military power at their disposal. Nupe kingdom equally guaranteed corporate territorial rights to its various subject groups. The Kede, as one of these subject groups, enjoyed these territorial rights with respect to their undisturbed possession of the whole riverain area.

634 But the presence of a strong and expanding group like the Kede
423 in the political framework of the Nupe State must invite conflicts
578 over the territorial rights of other subject groups of Nupe which are neighbours of the Kede in the river area. As the more recent history of Nupe shows, conflicts of this kind have frequently

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arisen. Their occurrence or avoidance is clearly bound up with the interpretation put on Kede political autonomy—a point which we will discuss under a separate heading.

VI. The Claim to Autonomy

Let me say, first, that the administration of Kede country presents an exact analogy to the administration of Nupe kingdom. Emissaries from the capital, delegates recruited from the ruling house, are in charge of the administrative districts of the Emirate as they are of the district of Kede country. This analogy reflects the analogous political evolution in both countries: the rise to power of a small group over a large country with heterogeneous population. The only exception from this rule of administering the districts of the Emirate through royal delegates is Kede country itself, which remained under its own chief, who acted as the representative of the *Etsu* Nupe. Even for this exception there is a parallel to be found in Kede organization: the emissary system did not apply to the area of the upper-stream Kede. Their whole area was regarded as one sub-district of Kede country and was placed in charge, not of an emissary from Muregi, but of one of their own chiefs, the village chief of Bele, their southernmost settlement. The explanation for this privileged position of the two groups, the Kede *Tifin* under Kede and the Kede under Nupe, is most probably the same—namely, that their rulers would have found it difficult to control themselves effectively the territory of these subject communities: the Kede the country of the upper-stream group, which was not easy to reach with their big canoes (note that they made the chief in the place farthest down-stream the 'deputy' for the whole group), and the Nupe kings the whole river area.

To the down-stream Kede their autonomous position in Nupe Emirate is a sacred trust, dating back to their first chief who received, with the chieftainship of Kede, the 'Rule over the Water' from the mythical Tsoede. The Kede chiefs still style themselves *Etsu nya nuwā* ('King of the Water'), and, as their history shows, have always taken this title very literally. It meant to them more than merely the formal concession of assigning to a Kede chief duties normally discharged by a royal delegate, and they have in the past frequently attempted to acquire a larger